



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

FY 2006 Alpena FRO Accomplishment Summary

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Loss and alteration of aquatic habitats are principal factors in the decline of native fish and other aquatic resources and the loss of biodiversity. Seventy percent of the Nation's rivers have altered flows, and 50 percent of waterways fail to meet minimum biological criteria. The Alpena Fishery Resources Office in Alpena, Michigan addresses habitat conservation issues through the Habitat and Ecosystem Health Branch. The branch is involved with habitat restoration, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and fish passage issues. The accomplishments listed below provide examples of habitat related activities conducted by the Alpena FRO in Fiscal Year 2006 (October 2005-September 2006).

Fish Passage Improvement on the Little Ocqueoc River



Photo S. Wells, USFWS

*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On October 24, 2005, the Presque Isle County Road Commission completed a culvert replacement at the Silver Creek road crossing on the Little Ocqueoc River in Northern Lower Michigan. The project identified two undersized and perched culverts that negatively impacted native brook trout passage in the Ocqueoc River Watershed. In addition to impeding fish movement, the aging and undersized culverts contributed to large amounts of sediment entering the system during

high water events when the water was backed up by the small culverts and would flood the gravel road. The project was completed by replacing the failing culverts with a bottomless culvert constructed from a railroad tanker car. This design was utilized to reduce cost, provide durability and allow for unimpeded fish access to habitat upstream. Replacement of the culvert will decrease the sediment load entering the system and improve fish habitat. Oversight for the project during construction was provided by Alpena FRO Biologist Wells and Kris Bruestle from Huron Pines RC&D. Funding for this project was provided by the Region 3 Fish Passage Program, the Presque Isle County Road Commission, and Huron Pines RC&D.

This is an example of collaboration between federal, state and local governments and watershed groups to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources including native brook trout. This project involved collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management”.

Potential Fish Passage for 2006

Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist

On November 1, 2005, Biologist Wells submitted six full proposals for the US Fish and Wildlife Service fish passage program. Included in those proposals were five dam removals, three in Ohio and two in Michigan, and one culvert replacement in Michigan. All of the projects were identified as priorities by state agencies and other partners. Restoring fish passage at the six sites would result in approximately 110 river miles opened to fish movement for spawning, rearing, and foraging.

This is an example of collaboration between federal and state agencies and NGOs to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. These projects have the ability to enhance fish passage of native fish species within the many watersheds. This effort addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priorities of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” and “Partnerships and Accountability”.

Greendocks- A Demonstration Site on Indian River



Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist Heather Rawlings met with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council (Watershed Council) representative Jennifer Geld and Tuscarora Township (Township) Clerk Diane Hahn in Indian River, MI on November 8, 2005 to view and discuss the “Greendocks” project. In 2003 the Cheboygan County Road Commission donated a strip of riparian property on the Indian River to Tuscarora Township.

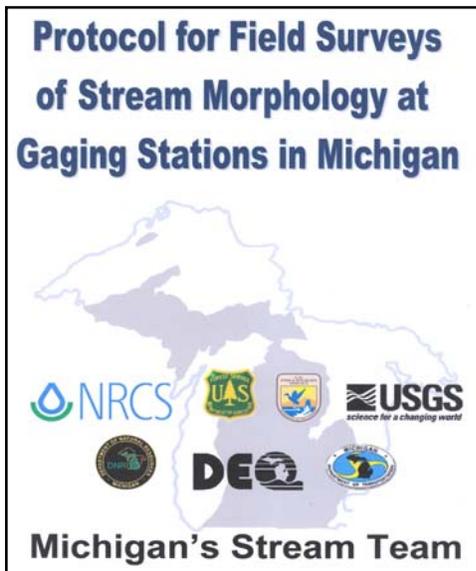
This site has been used by locals as a swimming hole and illegal docking site for small boats traveling through the “Inland waterways” connecting Burt, Mullet, and Black Lakes. The 340 foot strip of riparian property is stabilized by an ageing steel seawall. The seawall is deteriorating, and due to road run-off a section of the riparian land is rapidly eroding into the river. The goal of the Township is to keep this area accessible as a swimming and docking area,

control erosion, and provide in-stream habitat for walleye, yellow perch, panfish and possibly spawning habitat for an inland population of lake sturgeon. Once adjacent landowners see the benefits- both aesthetic and environmental- of the restoration effort it is our hope and belief that they may consider similar projects along their properties.

The Service and Watershed Council are working with Township officials and engineers to design a site exclusively using natural materials such as field stone, large woody debris, and native vegetation to restore aquatic habitat at the site, yet provide for community needs as well. Local landowners have raised \$40,000 to restore the site, and the Township has agreed to match these funds. Rawlings applied for Service funding through Private Lands Fish Habitat Restoration funds, and the Watershed Council is pursuing funding as well. Early estimates for the project place costs at approximately \$110,000. Construction will take place during the summer of 2006.

A 340 foot stretch of riparian and in-stream habitat along the Indian River will be restored in the summer of 2006 to benefit warmwater and coolwater fish species, including an inland population of lake sturgeon. Completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects contribute toward the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" component of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Michigan Stream Team



*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On December 7, 2005, Biologists Wells and Rawlings participated in a Michigan Stream Team meeting. Representatives of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), U. S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U. S. Forest Service (USFS), and U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) compose the Michigan Stream Team. The Stream Team was formed in 2003 to develop statewide regional curves, where appropriate gage data are available, based on relationships of hydrologic parameters. The long term goal of the Michigan Stream

Team is to provide those involved in stream restoration efforts a tool to improve restoration design and minimize disturbances to stream channels and their associated floodplains and wetlands.

The meeting was convened to discuss hiring of a person to conduct the majority of the surveying needed to calculate regional curves in Michigan. The group decided to work through the USGS and hire a graduate student. Approval from MDEQ, who will be supplying the start money for this project, is needed before moving forward with the selection of a graduate student. Final revisions for the *Protocol for Field Surveys of Stream Morphology at Gaging Stations in*

Michigan, a document compiled by the Michigan Stream Team to standardize methods used for surveying stream segments, were discussed and the document will be ready for public use by mid January. The next Stream Team meeting was scheduled for January 25, 2006 in East Lansing Michigan.

This project works with the Michigan Stream Team to address the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future. The Michigan Stream Team work will benefit all of the aquatic resources within Michigan by providing the correct data for managers to utilize when designing aquatic restoration projects.

Thunder Bay Project Implementation Working Committee Meeting

*Submitted by Aaron Woldt
Fishery Biologist*

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt participated in a Working Committee meeting for the Thunder Bay Power Company Thunder Bay River Project Implementation. The Working Committee was created to assist Thunder Bay Power (TBP) in meeting the requirements of its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license. Biologist Woldt is the Service representative on the Working Committee.

The primary focus of the December 7, 2005 meeting was to discuss finalization of the sale of the Thunder Bay Power Projects to North American Hydro (NAH). NAH officially took over operation of the Thunder Bay River hydroelectric projects on July 30 and chose to retain the Thunder Bay Power name. Working Committee members met Scott Klabunde, NAH midwest plant operations manager, who will represent NAH at working committee meetings. Discussions also included the disposition of lands adjacent to Thunder Bay River hydroelectric projects that were not sold to NAH. Most of these lands were sold for development. Planned development at the Hubbard Lake site will cause a conflict with existing plans for a recreational fishing pier scheduled to be built in 2013 by TBP using funds from the settlement escrow account. The Working Committee listened to a proposal to relocate the proposed pier to the opposite side of the river with the developer absorbing all construction costs for the pier, foot path, and parking lot to be constructed 7 years ahead of schedule in 2006. The Working Committee agreed to accept or decline the developer's proposal at its March 2006 meeting.

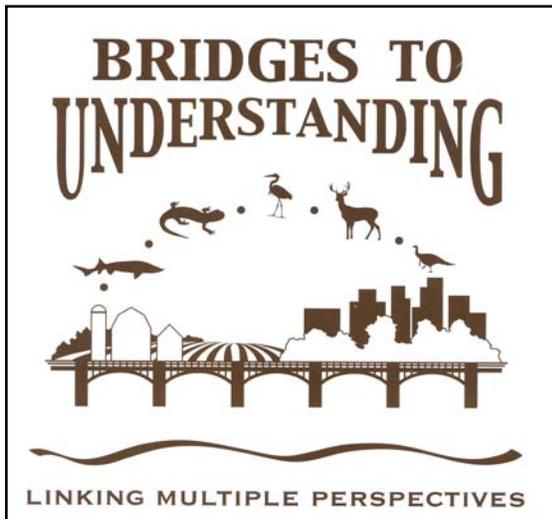
The Working Committee also discussed license article 409 pertaining to downstream fish passage and protection. Great Lakes Environmental Center (GLEC), a contractor retained by TBP, recently completed a draft downstream fish passage and protection evaluation including a "desktop" model/evaluation of existing fishery data as directed by the working group at its June 2005 meeting. The committee agreed to review the draft report within 30 days. NAH agreed to seek a filing extension from FERC, if necessary, to allow for the full 30 day review by MDNR and Service staff.

The meeting was attended by member representatives from Michigan DNR, NAH, and the Service. In addition representatives from the Hubbard Lake Sportsmen and Improvement

Association, Montmorency Conservation District, Thunder Bay Audubon Society, and Northeast Michigan Council of Governments also participated.

Service involvement in the TBP Working Committee provides opportunities to minimize or mitigate the impacts of habitat alteration on fish and other aquatic species caused by hydropower facilities in the Thunder Bay River system. This outcome is consistent with the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

2005 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference



*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

Biologists Susan Wells and Heather Rawlings attended the 2005 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference held December 11-14, 2005 in Grand Rapids, MI. The theme for the conference was “Bridges to Understanding- Linking Multiple Perspectives”, and was held in conjunction with the 9th Annual National Wild Turkey Symposium. A large range of topics were covered during the conference, however Wells and Rawlings focused on the habitat conservation/stream restoration related-papers. Because the conference was held in Michigan, the conference was dominated by Michigan agency personnel, and was an excellent

networking opportunity for Alpena FRO staff.

Education about habitat restoration projects contribute toward the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” component of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Michigan Stream Team Receives Funding to Begin Fieldwork

*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

The Michigan Stream Team (Team), consisting of representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Calhoun Conservation District, Michigan State University (MSU), and the Service met on January 25, 2006 in East Lansing, MI at the Service’s East Lansing Field Office. The Team was formed to develop regional curves showing bankfull dimensions versus drainage area for physiographic provinces in Michigan. The greatest item of interest at the January meeting was that the Team has received enough funding to begin fieldwork this summer to gather the data required to



develop regional reference curves for Michigan, which is a short-term goal of the team. The MDEQ has awarded the Team funding in 319 funds for the next 3 years to hire a graduate student to lead data collection efforts. Kristine Bosley-Morse, an employee of the Calhoun Conservation District, and a graduate student at Michigan State University has been hired to lead this project. Ms. Bosley-Morse has been working with the Team since its inception. MSU made a strong contribution to the project by committing to purchasing a total station (surveying unit) to assist with stream surveys. The MDNR has applied for and

received a 2-year grant that will fund MDNR staff involvement, including a field crew to assist Ms. Bosley-Morse. USGS has committed to providing gaging data and analysis to the field crews, and all of the resource agencies will be needed to complete initial site checks, to gain trespass permission from private landowners, and to assist with future training efforts.

Mr. Dave Fongers from the MDEQ announced that the Team's website was almost completed, and was expected to be running by the end of February. The website is now on-line, and can be accessed by going to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's home page (<http://www.michigan.gov/deq>), and then search "Michigan Stream Team". The website describes the Team, its members, its purpose and accomplishments. The website also contains the finalized version of "Protocol for Field Surveys of Stream Morphology at Gaging Stations in Michigan", a document that serves as procedural protocol to conduct regional reference curve field data collection which was developed by the Team in 2005.

Regional reference curve development is important to all natural resource professionals concerned with proper river restoration. This critical data will take the guesswork out of river restoration in Michigan, and provide restoration efforts with the information to develop successful and stable outcomes to their projects. Alpena FRO Biologists Heather Rawlings and Susan Wells serve as Service representatives on the Team.

Regional reference curve development is important to all natural resource professionals concerned with proper river restoration. This critical data will take the guesswork out of river restoration in Michigan, and provide restoration efforts with the information to develop successful and stable outcomes to their projects. Completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects contribute to the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" priority of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Meeting to Discuss the Future of the Chesaning Dam

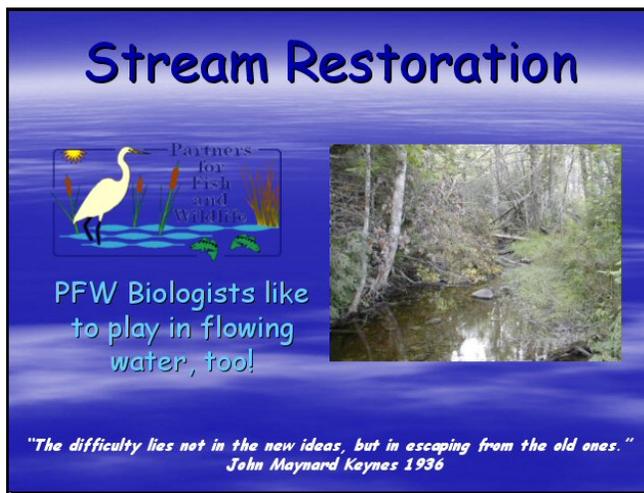
*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On February 13, 2006, Biologist Wells attended a meeting with interested stakeholders to discuss the retrofit of the Chesaning Dam in Chesaning, Michigan. The City is interested in doing a fish passage retrofit to their dam. The dam is located within a city park on the Shiawassee River and is in danger of failing due to structural compromises at the base and along the shoreline. There are local concerns that complete removal would have an adverse economic impact on the community as there are several summer activities associated with the pond created by the dam including a popular showboat attraction. Instead, they are proposing a project design entailing the use of a rock ramp to allow for fish passage and restore the structural integrity of the dam.

Representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, Public Sector Consultants, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and Wade-Trim were in attendance. Each attendee gave a brief overview of grant opportunities that their organization or others that might help fund this project. The city has successfully begun to solicit private funds that could be used as match towards various grants. This project has strong community support and the representatives involved with the meeting expressed support for the project and a desire to move forward.

This is an example of collaboration between government, watershed groups, and other non-governmental organizations to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. This project has the potential to restore fish passage to 37 miles of mainstream and tributary habitat. This project involves collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priorities of "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" and "Partnerships and Accountability".

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Tri-State Meeting



*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

Project Leader McClain and Biologist Rawlings traveled to Angola, IN March 28-30, 2006 for the first annual Tri-State Partners for Fish and Wildlife meeting. This meeting allowed biologists and supervisors from three states- Michigan, Indiana and Ohio to share ideas and compare strategies to make our programs more consistent regionally, with one another and possibly find new and better ways to achieve habitat restoration goals on private lands. Mr. Jeffrey Kiefer, State Coordinator

of the Indiana Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program was the host of the meeting, which was

held at the Potawatomi Inn in Pokagon State Park. Biologist Rawlings was the moderator and presenter for a discussion concerning watershed restoration. Topics for the session included fish passage, stream bank restoration, large woody debris placement, and the science of stream restoration.

Approximately 60 natural resources professionals attended the meeting, including Service personnel from both the Regional and Washington Offices. This meeting and completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects contribute toward the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” and “Partnerships and Accountability” priorities of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

National Fish Habitat Initiative Discussed at Tri-State Partners Meeting



*Submitted by Jerry McClain
Fishery Biologist*

Project Leader McClain attended the Tri-State Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Program meeting held in Angola, Indiana March 28-30, 2006. As part of the meeting agenda McClain provided the group an overview and update on the National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI). The presentation provided information on this new program to state and local Partners coordinators from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana and stimulated discussion on how the Service’s numerous habitat restoration programs can be better

coordinated to enhance the overall effort.

This effort will assist in improving coordination and collaboration between Service programs for habitat restoration and is consistent with and supportive of the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” and “Partnerships and Accountability” priorities of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Thunder Bay Project Implementation Working Committee Meeting



*Submitted by Aaron Woldt
Fishery Biologist*

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt participated in a Working Committee meeting for the Thunder Bay Power Company Thunder Bay River Project Implementation. The Working Committee was created to assist Thunder Bay Power (TBP) and its parent company North American Hydro (NAH) in meeting the requirements of its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license. Biologist Woldt is the Service representative on the Working Committee.

The primary focus of the March 29, 2006 meeting was to discuss the filing of a final report that evaluated downstream fish passage/diversion strategies for NAH projects on the Thunder Bay River. Based on comments from the Service and MDNR, this report made use of existing fish community data in a “desktop” model evaluation to identify fish passage/diversion strategies that would be appropriate and cost effective for the NAH projects on the Thunder Bay River. The report was filed with FERC on February 22, 2006 by NAH. In addition, NAH also presented the results of its 2005 purple loosestrife and Eurasian water milfoil monitoring. The Working Committee also agreed to tentatively endorse a developer’s proposal to relocate a proposed fishing pier at the Hubbard Lake Dam to the opposite side of the river with the developer absorbing all construction costs for the pier, foot path, and parking lot to be constructed in 2006. The Working Committee asked to see detailed plans of the proposed structure before granting final approval.

The meeting was attended by member representatives from Michigan DNR, NAH, and the Service. In addition representatives from the Hubbard Lake Sportsmen and Improvement Association, Montmorency Conservation District, Thunder Bay Audubon Society, and Northeast Michigan Council of Governments also participated.

Service involvement in the TBP Working Committee provides opportunities to minimize or mitigate the impacts of habitat alteration on fish and other aquatic species caused by hydropower facilities in the Thunder Bay River system. This outcome is consistent with the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Field Season Begins with Explosion of Work



*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

The Alpena FRO’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program field season began in a dramatic fashion in early April 2006 due to an early snowmelt and warmer than average temperatures. A record number of landowners have contacted Biologist Heather Rawlings with requests for site visits and the Service’s involvement on stream, wetland, and grassland improvement projects. Sixteen site visits were conducted in eight counties, two surveys were completed, two fieldwork planning meetings were held, and Rawlings participated in Earth Day, a large outreach event targeted at schoolchildren held in Lansing, MI.

A record number of requests ensure projects that will be chosen for funding will be higher quality sites with more partner participation. The Alpena FRO annually provides approximately \$180,000 towards habitat restoration projects in Northern Michigan through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Completion of habitat restoration projects contribute toward the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” priority of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Post Monitoring of the Little Ocqueoc Fish Passage Project in Northern Lower Michigan



*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On April 11, 2006 Biologist Wells and Huron Pines RC&D conducted a post construction survey of a 2005 project site on the Little Ocqueoc Creek. The survey was completed to document changes in the morphology of the stream that may be occurring. Wells and personnel from Huron Pines RC&D had conducted a pre-construction survey on August 31, 2005. The Little Ocqueoc is a tributary to the Ocqueoc River, which is a state

designated blue ribbon trout stream. The site contained twin perched culverts that prohibited fish movement into the upper stretches of the system. The Presque Isle County Road Commission completed the project in October of 2005 using a bottomless railroad tanker car.

Both pre and post-construction surveys included a full longitudinal profile of 500 feet of the stream above and below the site. A comprehensive pebble count was also conducted to document substrate above and below the structure. Kris Bruestle from Huron Pines RC&D entered the information for both evaluations into a computer program which drew the profile and calculated the dominate substrate. The post-construction survey data indicates that a change has occurred in the plunge pool dimensions below the new structure. However, the hydraulics of the system are still conforming to changes resulting from installation of the new bottomless structure. In the fall of 2006 the survey will be repeated to continue documenting any morphological changes that may be occurring. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has provided historical fishery data for this area and has plans to return to this site for a fishery assessment within the next two years. The fishery data combined with the morphological data will provide a comprehensive look at changes in the morphology and biology of system before and after a restoration project has occurred.

This is an example of collaboration between government and non-governmental organizations to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. This project enhances fish passage of native brook trout within the Ocqueoc River watershed. The project involves collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the

Future priorities of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” and “Partnerships and Accountability”.

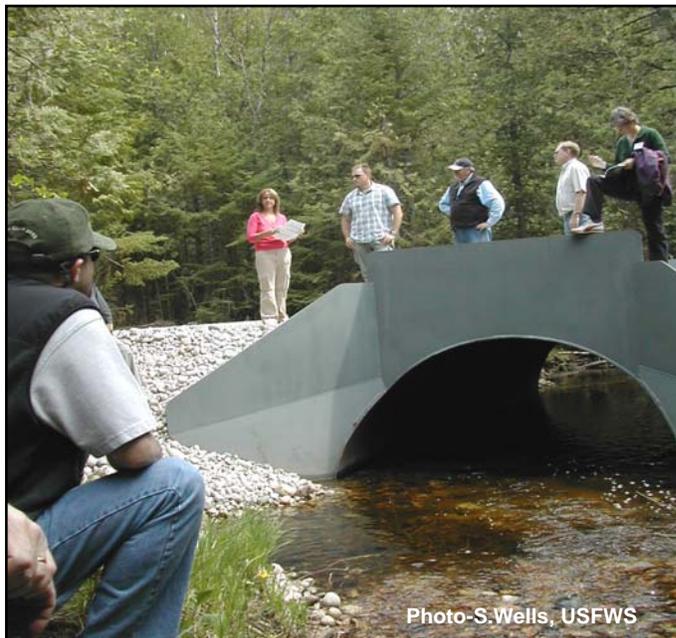
Severance Creek Bliss Road Fish Passage Project Completed

*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On April 20, 2006, the Antrim County Road Commission completed a culvert replacement at the Bliss Road crossing on Severance Creek in Northern Lower Michigan. The project identified two undersized and perched culverts that negatively impacted native brook trout passage in the Jordan River Watershed. The culvert also contributed to ponding of water upstream causing water temperatures to warm. The project was completed by replacing the perched culverts with a bottomless culvert. Replacement of the culvert opened up approximately 3 miles of aquatic habitat for native brook trout. Oversight for project construction was provided by Alpena FRO Biologists Wells and Enterline and Kim Balke from the Conservation Resources Alliance (CRA). Funding for this project was provided by the Region 3 Fish Passage Program, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Service, the Antrim County Road Commission, and in kind services from CRA.

This is an example of collaboration between federal, state and local governments and watershed groups to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources including native brook trout. This project involved collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management”.

First Ever Region 3 Fish Passage Workshop



*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

The Alpena FRO hosted the first Regional Fish Passage Workshop (Workshop) from May 9 -11, 2006. Coordination for the Workshop was directed by the Regional Fish Passage Coordinator, Tim Patronski with assistance from a committee of field station fish passage coordinators. The purpose of the Workshop was to provide a forum to share ideas, concerns, and present examples of fish passage restoration among field offices, regional office, and other Service programs in an informal setting. Discussions during the Workshop revolved around issues such as

invasive species and the challenges they present when reconnecting habitats, development of a pre and post monitoring plan for fish passage projects, better coordination among Service programs to implement fish passage projects, and development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the fish passage program in Region 3.

Presentations were given by multiple Service programs including Refuges, Ecological Services, Fisheries, Sea Lamprey Control, Federal Aid, and the National Fish Passage Coordinator. This provided the attendees a cross programmatic overview of projects occurring throughout the region and stimulated discussion on differing methodologies for conducting projects. As part of the Workshop, Biologist Susan Wells (Alpena FRO Fish Passage Coordinator) led a field trip to a local culvert replacement project recently completed with the use of a recycled railroad tanker car as a bottomless culvert. Attendees of the Workshop were able to engage in productive discussions concerning fish passage projects and their implementation. The Workshop was well received by all in attendance with the anticipation that a follow up meeting will occur next year and be expanded to include Service partners.

This is an example of collaboration between Service programs to enhance aquatic habitat restoration which will benefit fish and wildlife resources and increase coordination within the agency. This effort addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priorities of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” and “Partnerships and Accountability”.

Construction Has Begun for Alpena FRO Partners Program



*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

Construction began on May 23, 2006 to restore 19 acres of wetlands on 5 sites throughout Northern Michigan. Wetland restoration sites were on the properties of three private landowners located in Presque Isle, Montmorency and Cheboygan Counties. Spring construction at these sites means they will quickly fill with water, and will be able to benefit migratory birds and possibly provide nesting immediately. A mix of waterfowl,

shorebirds, and common upland birds were observed in the restored wetlands within 48 hours following construction. BCK Ventures out of Mio, Michigan was the contractor for the sites. Funding for the design and restoration of these sites was provided by the Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program. Design and oversight of the construction was provided by Biologist Rawlings, PFW Coordinator for Northern Michigan.

Completion of habitat restoration projects contribute toward the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” priority of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

June Meeting with Otsego Road Commission



*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On June 15, 2006, Biologists Wells and Rawlings met with representatives from Huron Pines RC&D and the Otsego County Road Commission to discuss two pending road crossing projects, on Crapo Creek and Gillis Creek. The Gillis Creek project is funded with 2004 Fish Passage money and consist of an undersized perched culvert that will be replaced this fall with a bottomless structure. Gillis Creek is a headwater tributary to the Black River which is a state designated Blue Ribbon Trout

Stream. Replacement of the current structure will restore 2 miles of brook trout passage to spawning and nursery areas.

The Crapo Creek project, funded with 2005 Fish Habitat Restoration money, is a bridge crossing on a tributary to the AuSable River which another state designated Blue Ribbon Trout Stream. The bridge is low and narrow and was installed years ago as a temporary crossing. Because the crossing was improperly designed, large amounts of sediment enter the stream at this point and flow directly into the AuSable River. The gravel road washes out annually and many partners have identified it as a problem site. Project planning has begun for this site with expected completion in 2007.

This is an example of collaboration between state and federal government agencies, watershed groups, and non profit organizations to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. These projects will enhance fish passage and fish habitat for brook trout into reaches of the Black River Watershed and AuSable River Watershed. This project addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management”.

Detroit River Refuge Elizabeth Park Meeting

*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On June 27, 2006, Biologist Wells met with staff from the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, Wayne County Parks Department, Detroit River Alliance, and Nativescape to discuss an upcoming restoration project involving a grant obtained through the US Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program. The project will consist of stabilizing 300 feet of riverine buffer strips along the Detroit River on Elizabeth Park the oldest County Park in Michigan.



This project will utilize innovative partnerships to assist to conduct a habitat restoration project. The project, coordinated by the Alpena FRO and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, will reduce sediments directly entering the Detroit River system by restoring natural vegetation and creating buffer zones along the river. Reducing the sedimentation into the river will restore fish spawning and rearing habitats. Further, it will demonstrate innovative techniques for restoring coastal habitat and teach these techniques to other conservation partners in a hands-on

volunteer workshop. Soft engineering techniques that will be used to stabilize shorelines along the Detroit River and enhance habitat, will also improve the aesthetics and fishing opportunities.

This is an example of collaboration between government and local interest groups to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. This project involves collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority of "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management".

Aquatic Habitat Restoration Tour in Ohio



*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

Biologist Wells visited potential Fish Passage and Coastal Program projects in Ohio during the week of July 24, 2006. Representatives from the Ohio Division of Wildlife (ODOW), Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District, Chagrin Watershed Coordinators, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Ohio Partners Program and Alpena FRO spent 2 days touring potential stream restoration sites. Three dams within the Cleveland area were

viewed by the group as good fish passage projects. One of the dams viewed, on Euclid Creek, has already received funding in 2006 from the Service's Fish Passage Program and is scheduled for removal in 2007. Another dam upstream from the funded Euclid Creek project is a larger structure owned by Ohio Department of Transportation and would take a few years to coordinate before removal would be an option. The last dam visited by the group was within the Chagrin River Watershed. It is a privately owned structure that was created to pond water for the local community but is now being looked at with the option of removal versus the cost of maintenance

because it is filling with sediment. A fourth dam, within the Findlay area, was visited by the Service and ODOW. The dam is owned by ODOW and they are hoping to provide fish passage to upstream waters. It is located on the Auglaize River, a major tributary to the Maumee River. This proposed project involves cutting the head of the dam and installing rock rapids below to allow fish to migrate above the dam.

Two other projects that involve in-stream work were viewed including restoration of delta islands at the mouth of Euclid Creek which has potential for funding through the Coastal Program. Upon conclusion of the tour, Biologist Wells identified one new Fish Passage project for potential funding in 2007 and other projects that have potential for funding in future years as partners start to come together.

This is an example of collaboration between government and non-profit organizations that will benefit fish and wildlife resources by enhancing aquatic habitat. This project provides fish passage assistance for northern pike, bass, and darter species into reaches of the Cuyahoga, Chagrin, and Auglaize River Watersheds. This project involves collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priorities of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” and “Partnerships and Accountability”.

Survey on the Rifle River



*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On August 15, 2006 Biologist Wells assisted SCEP enrollee Andrea Ania with stream survey work in the Rifle River Watershed. Two stream cross sections were taken for each of the eight sites. This effort is part of a larger project that will aid in determining the effects of restoration work that has and will be occurring in the Rifle River Watershed. Other factors being considered for this project include flow data, temperature

data, and fishery data. Ania will be compiling the information as part of her graduate studies.

This is an example of collaboration between government and non-governmental organizations to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. This project addresses the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priorities of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” and “Partnerships and Accountability”.

Thunder Bay River and Black River Habitat Restoration Projects Completed



*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

Summer work crews on the Thunder Bay River and the Black River concluded their season on August 18, 2006. Supported by the Alpena FRO's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, private landowners, local sporting organizations, and non-governmental organizations these work crews were able to accomplish an impressive amount of work.

The summer work crew on the Black River (Cheboygan River Watershed) accomplished placement of 145 large woody debris (LWD) structures for the purpose of fish cover and to deflect the current of the river to restore a deeper, narrower river channel. These structures were placed on 7 stretches of the Black River, which actively improved 10 river miles of the watershed. In addition to the LWD structures, the crew accomplished the removal of 25 beaver dams on 4 headwater streams, benefiting 8 miles of stream habitat. The removal was in conjunction with an active trapping program on two of the creeks. One erosion site was restored. The Black River watershed is a coldwater system, with brook trout and lake sturgeon the predominant species. The Federally Endangered Hungerford's crawling water beetle is located in both tributaries and the main branch of this river.

The Thunder Bay River work crew restored six erosion sites in Alpena and Montmorency Counties, benefiting 5 miles of river habitat. Two access stairways were built on the main branch of the river, and 2,000 shrubs were planted to stabilize the upper banks of erosion sites restored in FY '05 and '06. Projects benefited yellow perch, northern pike, and smallmouth bass located in this coolwater watershed.

Completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects contribute toward the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" component of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Wetland Construction Wrapping Up

*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

The Alpena Fishery Resources Office Partners for Fish and Wildlife program is in the process of completing construction of twenty-three wetlands on thirteen private properties in seven counties

in Northern Michigan. Construction began in May, and will be completed by the end of September 2006. This construction restored or enhanced eighty-four acres of wetlands for the 2006 fiscal year. Four new excavating companies were contracted for the FY06 season, and for the most part their work has been exceptional. Fall rains, which have been plentiful to date, should fill these wetlands quickly to provide habitat for the fall bird migration.

Completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects contribute toward the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” component of the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Fish Passage Restoration Along the Potagannissing River on Drummond Island



*Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist*

On September 22, 2006, the Potagannissing Dam project was completed. A small dam existed on the Potagannissing River, within 3 miles of the Harbor Island NWR in Potagannissing Bay. This structure traditionally has blocked upstream passage of many fish species, particularly native northern pike, walleye, and white sucker. Many marsh-like lakes exist upstream of this dam and has historically provided ideal spawning habitat for

northern pike before passage was blocked. The Michigan DNR installed an old, denial style fish ladder was located at the dam in the 1970's, but it has never proven successful at passing fish both upstream and downstream.

The fish ladder was removed as part of the project and the headwall of the dam completely removed. A series of four rock weirs were placed below the removed headwall to create a rock fish-ramp thereby reducing slope and creating appropriate resting pools for upstream migration of important native species, particularly northern pike which have been declining in this region. Partners for this project included the Michigan DNR who completed the design, survey, and permit work for this project, and the Drummond Island Sportsman's Club. They were an integral partner who brought this project to our attention and contributed monetary funds towards its completion. This project restored 1 mile of riverine habitat and provided access to 434 acres of wetland habitat for migrating fish within the Potagannissing Bay.

This is an example of collaboration between federal, state and local governments and watershed groups to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources including native brook trout. This project involved collaboration between many partners and addresses the

Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority of “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management”.

The **Alpena Fishery Resources Office (FRO)** is located in Alpena, Michigan and works to meet U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fishery and Ecosystem goals within Lake Huron, Western Lake Erie, and connecting waters of the St. Marys River, St. Clair River, and Detroit River. Activities include Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management, Cooperation with Native Americans, Leadership in Science and Technology, Partnerships and Accountability, Public Use, and Workforce Management – all of which are conducted in alignment with the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future. The station is one of many field offices located within Region 3, the Great Lakes Big Rivers Region. For more information about Alpena FRO programs and activities visit our web site located at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/alpena/>.

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